'THE RINGWOOD FIELD NATURALIST' CLUB NEWSLETTER

Issue No. 31 October, 2010

EDITORIAL: The Club is approaching a major milestone in its history and next year will celebrate its half centenary. Events are planned where members will have the opportunity to get together to celebrate our achievements and to look back over 50 years of enjoyment of the study of nature in the field. We hope that as many members as possible will participate in these events and recall the great memories of their time in the Club. From its foundation in September 1961 to the present day the Club has accumulated a wealth of knowledge and experience from its activities throughout Victoria, forming a valuable archive for future reference. If you have any stories or memorabilia that you would like to share, please contact a member of the Committee.

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Members enjoying the Tahbilk Wetlands walk at the Nagambie Camp, May 2010

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PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

Hazel Veevers

The Club has enjoyed another very successful year with good attendances at all meetings and excursions. The programme has been very varied with topics ranging from gorillas in East Africa to a flight over the South Magnetic Pole. Local fauna was well represented with fascinating talks on lyrebirds, the blue imperial butterfly, sugar gliders and tuans. Member's contributions at the meetings have become a real highlight. Digital photography has enabled many members to present a variety of subjects from insects to geology for discussion, identification etc. Many of the photographs are of a very high standard and are much appreciated.

Excursions have been held to many different venues, some new to the Club such as R J Chamber's Reserve and Heritage Wetlands and others to old favourites such as the Brisbane Ranges. Two interesting, though sobering, trips were to areas which had been badly burnt in the 2009 bushfires; Lake Mountain and Murrundindi. It would be good to visit them again in the future to see how they regenerate.

Two major highlights of the year were the weekend field trips, one in Spring to Horsham and the other in Autumn to Nagambie. Both of these were very well organised by Alison and Peter Rogers and thoroughly enjoyed by all the participants.

A successful field care day was held at Pound Bend, Warrandyte, when 300 trees and grasses were planted.

Many thanks to all the Committee who work very hard to keep the Club running so successfully. Three committee members are retiring this year; Marion King, Phil Daniell and Judith Cooke. All three have served on the Committee for many years and we are all grateful to them for their years of loyal service.

Special thanks must go to Alison and Peter Rogers for running many of the excursions and field weekends. Thanks also to our Treasurer Ray Wall, Webmaster Alan Veevers, David Hewitt for his technical assistance at meetings and to Loris Peggie for auditing the accounts.

We were saddened to hear of the death of Ken Clark at the age of 95. Ken had been a member for many years and attended events until quite recently, always bringing with him his passion for insects.

The Club is entering its 50th year, which is a great achievement for the many members who have contributed so willingly to the running of the Club over all the years. Various activities will be held over the next year to celebrate this milestone. We invite you all to participate and to encourage others to value and enjoy our wonderful natural environment.

RETIREMENTS FROM THE COMMITTEE

This year saw three long-serving Committee members (with a total of 71 years of Committee experience between them) retire from the Committee.

Judith Cooke - Judith has been a member of the Committee for 21 years, undertaking the roles of Secretary (1977, 1978, 1982, 1983) and as President (1997, 1998, 2000, 2001). She has been the newsletter editor since 1995 - a role in which she will continue.

Phil Daniell - Phil has been a Committee member since 1984 - a total of 27 years, undertaking the roles of Secretary for 7 years (from 1985 to 1991) and as President for 2004 and 2005. He has been responsible for setting up displays publicising the Club in various libraries for many years - a task he will continue.

Marion King - Marion has been a Committee member since 1988, a total of 23 years. For the last seven years she has assisted in the compilation of the program by helping to organise speakers and excursions.

At the Annual General Meeting, President Hazel Veevers offered a vote of thanks to these members for their input and efforts over these years.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Field Trip to Mt Tanglefoot and Surrounds – Sunday 18th April 2010

Leaders: Alison and Peter Rogers

22 members met on the Myers Creek Rd, Healesville, travelling to the Mt St Leonard car park for a quick morning tea. The birds were close by in the scrub with a lyrebird calling in the distance.

Our first stop was the Wirrawilla Rainforest walk. A walk along the boardwalk provided good fungi and luscious ferns with a good sighting of a Crescent honeyeater yet another highlight.

From here we travelled in convoy to the Tanglefoot Picnic area for our lunch. Our short walk after lunch was accompanied by a lyrebird calling close by. Highlights here included Flame robins and yet more fungi.

We moved further into the Murrundindi park visiting an unburnt area along Vince's Track. Here the Mountain Correa (*Correa lawrenciana*) was in full flower with Eastern spinebills provided entertainment whilst visiting these bells for pollen. Crescent Honeyeaters were also heard in this area.

Field Trip to Mt Tanglefoot and Surrounds (cont)

Moving down the mountain through the burnt areas, most members had not seen the devastation caused by the horrific 2009 fires. Our normal haunts, including The Cascades carpark, were unrecognisable and desolate. We stopped along the road to look down on the 3 falls making up the Cascades. These falls could be seen easily through the naked tree trunks, totally exposed with rocks and water visible. The very hot fire had removed most of the vegetation, but we were delighted to see signs of life *with Lamandra, Goodenia, Acacias* and other small herbage starting to appear.

Before leaving the State Forest we stopped again, this time at the Murrundindi Scenic Reserve area that we have visited many times as a group. This park area has been devastated and is now being redeveloped and hopefully will be ready for visiting soon. The Swinging Bridge has gone and hopefully will be rebuilt along with the picnic tables and camping areas. The call of a couple of Lyrebirds in the distance valley gave us an indication that all will be well again in this area.

Autumn Camp 2010 – Nagambie – 15-16 May 2010

Leaders: Peter and Alison Rogers

The Club held its autumn 'camp-out', at Nagambie on the weekend 15/16 May. 20 members and 1 visitor attended during the weekend. Most members made their base in the Lake Nagambie Caravan Park. Those who arrived early on the Friday afternoon spent time looking around the area and at the birds on Lake Nagambie.

Saturday's itinerary began with a visit to the old Graytown POW camp, where the Noisy friarbirds provided constant chatter. From here we travelled through the bush in the Heathcote-Graytown National Park, stopping occasionally to look around in the roadside woodlands. We had lunch in beautiful sunny conditions at the base of Mt Black. Here we were fortunate to see Scarlet Honeyeaters and a Brown goshawk. Our afternoon took us through the remainder of the National Park, stopping often to look at the roadside vegetation. We ended up at the Balaclava Mine Visitor Centre in the Whroo Historic Reserve after checking out the old Puddling machine.

Saturday highlights included:

- 62 birds recorded for the day with special sightings of Noisy Friarbirds, Little Friarbirds, Scarlet Honeyeaters, Spotted Quail-thrush, Blue-faced Honeyeater, Fuscous Honeyeater and Purple-crowned Lorikeets

Autumn Camp 2010 – Nagambie (cont)

- Beautiful stands of Australian Grass-trees
- 8 species of orchids (including *Pterostylis parviflora* (Tiny greenhood), *Pterostylis revoluta* (Large autumn greenhood), *Eriochilus cucullatus* (Parson's Bands), and *Acianthus pusillus* (Small mosquito orchid).

An early start on Sunday morning took us to the Tahbilk Wetlands and Wildlife Reserve. In the first 100 metres we saw an eastern water rat feeding in the reeds and crested shrike tits looking for insects high in the leaves of a eucalyptus. We walked for over 2 hours along the wetland paths which wandered near the river billabongs and some bush areas. Lunch was enjoyed near the historic part of the Tahbilk winery. In the afternoon, we took a Tahbilk Wetlands Cruise, travelling on the water and seeing the Wetlands from the river. Lovely reflections, tall gum trees, many water birds and the colony of flying foxes we had seen earlier in the day were observed on our leisurely trip. Sightings of an Azure kingfisher and a couple of Tawny frogmouths on the riverside completed a memorable weekend.

Sunday highlights included:

- 56 birds recorded for the Wetlands including 5 new sightings to add to their list
- Special sightings included White-breasted Wood swallow, White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike, Brown Quail and Olive-backed Orioles
- A sighting of Eastern Water Rat
- The colony of Flying foxes roosting in the trees alongside the wetland
- A leisurely cruise through the Tahbilk Wetlands.

Everyone had a great weekend, with some members staying for a few extra days.

Field Trip to Koomba Park Wantirna - 19th June 2010

Leaders: Graeme and Helen Fernandes

On a sunny but cool Saturday afternoon, 14 members and 1 visitor met at the Wantirna Recreation Reserve.

Our walk led to the track which runs parallel to the Dandenong Creek. Within a short distance there was a clump of Acacias which had many grey mistletoes (*Amyema quandang*) growing on them. Here yellow-winged Honeyeater is spotted amongst the mistletoe almost all year round. The group meandered up to Boronia Road car-park, passing by many magnificent Eucalypts.

After a short stop we split into two groups. Helen led eight members into the Winton Wetlands. The remaining members returned with Graeme via the new cycle/walking track, stopping along the way back by the open paddocks hoping to spot a Flame Robin that had been spotted earlier on. Turning off the bike track we ventured onto the broad-walk and into the bird hide at Koomba Lake. Here we were able to spot a pair of Australasian Grebes. From here we returned to the car-park where after a short chat the bird count was taken, consisting of 35, plus four feral birds.

The excursion finished at approximately 4.00 p.m.

Planting Day Pound Bend – 11th July 2010

13 members met with Vic Parks Rangers Kylie Penance and Adrian at the Pound Bend Picnic area where a tree planting morning had been organised. Members quickly divided themselves into small groups and for the next couple of hours planted, staked and put plant guards around over 300 plants indigenous to the area.

Eucalypts and Acacias were planted along the riverbank edge with members looking for spots where there was no overhead canopy. Lomandras were planted in the picnic area under the tall, established eucalypts.

The Rangers provided morning tea and we were accompanied by some friendly kookaburras. The whole time we were working we were serenaded by rainbow lorikeets, magpies, galahs, currawongs and a grey butcherbird.

By the end of the morning we felt we had achieved a good morning's work. Weeks later the majority of plants are still looking good, probably due to the good rain that we have had over the past few weeks.

Thanks to those who have contributed to the Field Care Days.

Alison Rogers

Field Trip to Heritage Wetlands - 18th July 2010

Leaders: Alan and Hazel Veevers

A large flock of Cattle Egrets in a paddock on the access road provided a welcome introduction to the Heritage Wetlands. 15 members enjoyed a cold but sunny morning strolling through the bush and wetlands between the Heritage Golf Course and the Yarra River. It was good to see well-established growth of the indigenous revegetated areas being well used by birds and kangaroos. Highlights of the walk included a low-flying Wedge-tailed Eagle, a Collared Sparrowhawk, a female Darter and a good sighting of Striated Pardalotes from the bridge. The water level in the river was higher than had been seen for a long time – a welcome sight after years of drought. 45 bird species were recorded.

We drove to Jumping Creek Reserve for lunch and then enjoyed a short walk along the river where the side of the gorge was lined with lush green mosses, ferns and a few orchids, mainly *Pterostylis nutans* and *Pterostylis melagramma*. The weather then deteriorated as we took the inland track back to the car park after a very satisfying Winter field trip.

Field Trip to Eagles Nest and Valley Picnic Areas, Silvan – 15th August 2010

Leaders: Alison and Peter Rogers

The forecast was not looking good with possible gale force winds and heavy rain. Twelve hardy members met at Silvan Reservoir in mild cool conditions with a few spots of rain. The decision was made to see how the weather turned out so we moved off. Arriving at Eagles Nest Picnic Area we had a quick morning tea, rugged up and made sure umbrellas were handy.

The tall eucalypts interspersed with acacias provided the canopy with green tree ferns, *Spyridium parvifolium* and some *Pimelea flava* a beautiful understorey. Although the rains during the preceding weeks had freshened up the bush, it appeared we would see little for the day with even the birds quiet. We started on the loop walk and had not walked far when light rain started to fall. Fortunately this was intermittent with only a very light breeze.

The further we walked the more of interest we found. Some fungi was scattered along the track and birds started to show themselves after awhile. Birding highlights included a very good sighting of the Large billed scrubwren to the accompaniment of song by a lyrebird. Fungi highlights included a large population of the leathery shelf fungus *Stereum illudens* and small set of Earth Stars.

We were scheduled to visit Valley Picnic Area for a further walk, and for those inclined, stay for a picnic lunch. By the time we had arrived at the Valley Picnic Area heavy rain had returned, effectively washing out any further activities.

Field Trip to Boomers Reserve and Ironbark Road Reserve - 4th September 2010

Leaders: Alan and Hazel Veevers

Nine intrepid Field Naturalists ignored severe weather warnings to visit Boomers Reserve where they enjoyed a feast of orchids, wattles, heaths and other early spring flowers. Fortunately the worst of the weather bypassed Melbourne and only slight drizzle hampered the photographers. Eight orchid species were in full flower and several others were in bud or leaf. Wine-lipped Spider Orchids (*Arachnorchis oenochila*) were flowering at the top of the hill. Acres of *Acacia genistifolia* provided a spectacular backdrop for the smaller plants. Scarlet Robins and Brown-headed Honeyeaters were bird highlights for the day.

After lunching in a rotunda in a Panton Hill park, eight of the group travelled to Ironbark Road Reserve at Diamond Creek where many other orchid species were observed, including Slaty Helmet Orchids (*Corybas incurvus*) and Small Gnat Orchids (*Cyrtostylis reniformis*). One member who had visited the reserve over many years said this year's orchid display was the best she had ever seen, possibly due to the heavy winter rains. As we returned to the car park a magnificent rainbow spanned the sky - a fitting finale to a most enjoyable field trip.

NATURE NOTES

Autumn Camp 2010 – Nagambie – Bird List

GRAYTOWN-HEATHCOTE NP AND WHROO FOREST 15 May 2010

Mountain Duck	White throated Treecreeper	Little Thornbill
Yellow billed Spoonbill	Brown Treecreeper	Laughing Kookaburra
Straw necked Ibis	Superb Fairy-wren	Australian Magpie
Royal Spoonbill	Eastern Spinebill	Magpie-Lark
Pacific Black Duck	Brown headed Honeyeater	Golden Whistler
Wood Duck	Blue faced Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush
Whistling Kite	White-plumed Honeyeater	Olive-backed Oriole
Brown Falcon	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Willie Wagtail
Brown Goshawk	New Holland Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Fuscous Honeyeater	Australian Raven
Black shouldered Kite	White naped Honeyeater	Grey Currawong
Purple Swamphen	Little Friarbird	Pied Currawong
Masked Lapwing	Noisy Friarbird	White-winged Chough
Galah	Noisy Miner	Flame Robin
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	White-eared Honeyeater	Yellow Robin
Musk Lorikeet	Red Wattlebird	Scarlet Robin
Little Lorikeet	Scarlet Honeyeater	Crested Pigeon
Purple crowned Lorikeet	Yellow tufted Honeyeater	Common Bronzewing
Crimson Rosella	Spotted Pardalote	Welcome Swallow
Eastern Rosella	Striated Pardalote	Spotted Quail-thrush
Long-billed Corella	Yellow rumped Thornbill	**62 species**

TAHBILK WETLANDS AND WILDLIFE RESERVE 16 May 2010

Australasian Grebe	Eastern Rosella	Tawny Frogmouth
Little Pied Cormorant	Red-rumped Parrot	Australian Magpie
Great Cormorant	Brown Treecreeper	Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike
Australian Darter	Superb Fairy-wren	White-bellied Cuckoo-shrike
Sacred Ibis	White-plumed Honeyeater	Crested Shrike-tit
Black Swan	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Grey Shrike-thrush
Pacific Black Duck	New Holland Honeyeater	Olive-backed Oriole
Chestnut Teal	Noisy Friarbird	Willie Wagtail
Whistling Kite	Noisy Miner	Grey Fantail
Little Eagle	Red Wattlebird	Little Raven
Brown Quail	Spotted Pardalote	Australian Raven
Purple Swamphen	Striated Pardalote	White-winged Chough
Dusky Moorhen	Little (Yellow) Thornbill	Flame Robin
Masked Lapwing	White-browed Scrubwren	Crested Pigeon
Galah	Red-browed Finch	Peaceful Dove
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	White-breasted Woodswallow	Common Bronzewing
Musk Lorikeet	Shining Bronze-cuckoo	Welcome Swallow
Little Lorikeet	Laughing Kookaburra	Silvereye
Crimson Rosella	Azure Kingfisher	**56 species**

Koomba Park - 19th June 2010 – Bird List

Bell Miner	Black Duck	Pied Currawong
Black-faced Cuckoo Shrike	Brown Thornbill	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo
Eurasian Coot	Little Corella	Little Pied Cormorant
Crested Pigeon	Pied Currawong	Dusky Moorhen
Grey Fantail	Flame Robin	Golden Whistler
Australasian Grebe	Grey Butcher-bird	Grey Shrike-thrush
New Holland Honeyeater	Straw-necked Ibis	White Ibis
Kookaburra	Masked Lapwing	Little Raven
Magpie	Magpie Lark	Noisy Miner
Purple Swamphen	Rainbow Lorikeet	Crimson Rosella
Eastern Rosella	Superb Fairy-wren	Welcome Swallow
Red Wattlebird	White-faced Heron	Willie Wagtail

Feral birds: Blackbird; Common Myna; Rock Dove; Turtle Dove

Heritage Wetlands - 18th July 2010 - Bird List

Australian Wood Duck	Eurasian Coot	White-plumed Honeyeater
Chestnut Teal	Masked Lapwing	Red Wattlebird
Pacific Black Duck	Galah	New Holland Honeyeater
Australasian Grebe	Long-billed Corella	Golden Whistler
Spotted Dove	Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Grey Shrike-thrush
Australian Darter	Rainbow Lorikeet	Grey Butcherbird
Little Pied Cormorant	Crimson Rosella	Australian Magpie
Cattle Egret	Eastern Rosella	Grey Fantail
White-faced Heron	Laughing Kookaburra	Willie Wagtail
Australian White Ibis	Superb Fairy-wren	Little Raven
Black-shouldered Kite	White-browed Scrubwren	Magpie-lark
Collared Sparrowhawk	Brown Thornbill	Silvereye
Wedge-tailed Eagle	Spotted Pardalote	Welcome Swallow
Purple Swamphen	Striated Pardalote	Common Blackbird (I)
Dusky Moorhen	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	Common Starling (I)

Silvan – 15th August 2010 – Fungi List

Clitocybe clitocyboides	*Collybia eucalyptorum* (?)
Coltricia cinnamonea	*Discinella terrestris*
Geastrum triplex (Earth Star)	*Hydnum repandum*
Leocarpus fragilis - a slime mould	*Schizophyllum commune* [T]
Stereum illudens	*Stereum ostrea*
Tremella fuciformis	*Tremella globispora*

[T] = a FungiMap target species

Silvan – 15th August 2010 – Bird List

Kookaburra	Crimson rosella	Yellow robin
Red wattle bird	White cockatoo	Grey fantail
Brown thornbill	Lyrebird (h)	Little raven
Large billed scrub wren	Superb fairy wren	Varied sitella
White browed scrub wren	Grey shrike thrush	Silver eye
White throated tree creeper	Welcome swallow	Eastern whip bird
Crested shrike tit		19 species

Boomers and Ironbark Road Reserves - 4th September 2010 Bird List

Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Yellow Thornbill	Golden Whistler
Horsefield's Bronze Cuckoo	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Shrike-thrush
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Eastern Spinebill	Australian Magpie
Laughing Kookaburra	White-eared Honeyeater	Grey Fantail
White-throated Treecreeper	Brown-headed Honeyeater	Little Raven
Brown Thornbill	White-naped Honeyeater	Scarlet Robin

Boomers and Ironbark Road Reserves - 4th September 2010
Orchid List

Species	Boomers	Ironbark Rd
Acianthus pusillus		X
Arachnorchis oenochila	X	
Arachnorchis parva	X	
Caladenia caerulea	X	X
Caladenia praecox		X
Corybas incurvus		X
Cyrtostylis reniformis		X
Diuris pardina	X	X
Glossodia major	Leaves	Leaves
Pterostylis concinna		X
Pterostylis curta	X	X
Pterostylis melagramma	X	X
Pterostylis nutans	X	X
Pterostylis pedunculata	X	X
		(X = in flower)

OBITUARY

KENNETH RAWLINGS CLARK (4.8.1914 - 30.7.2010)

This year the Club lost another of its long-serving members. Ken, with his wife Elva, was a regular participant at Club functions. A member of the Entomological Society, Ken was always willing to share his knowledge of insects with other Club members, often bringing display cases from his collection to meetings. Although not able to attend meetings for the past couple of years, he was still interested in the Club. Ken Clark passed away in his sleep at Amaroo House Nursing Home. Ken was 95 and was buried on his 96th birthday. Seven Club members attended the funeral service on Wednesday, 4th August.

R J Chambers Reserve - 15th November 2009 - Bird List

(for the Report of this Field Trip, refer to Newsletter No.30, April 2010)

Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoo	Common Bronzewing	Straw-necked Ibis
Sulphur-crested Cockatoo	Crimson Rosella	Australian King Parrot
Fan-tailed Cuckoo	Superb Lyrebird	Sacred Kingfisher
Horsefield's Bronze-Cuckoo	Yellow-faced Honeyeater	White-eared Honeyeater
Black-faced Cuckoo-shrike	Superb Fairy-wren	Grey Fantail
Rufous Fantail	Satin Flycatcher	Eastern Yellow Robin
Golden Whistler	Rufous Whistler	Grey Shrike-thrush
Silvereye	White-browed Scrubwren	Brown Thornbill
White-throated Treecreeper	Spotted Pardalote	Grey Butcherbird
Pied Currawong		(28 species)

Dates for your Diary

15-18 October 2010 Latrobe Valley FNC Inc. at Foster
25-28 March 2011 Angair Inc. at Anglesea

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